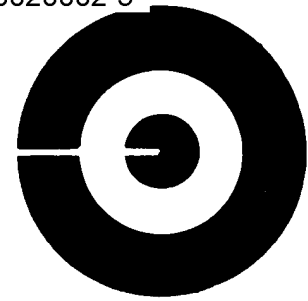


AIM

REPORT



Published by **ACCURACY IN MEDIA, INC.**
 1275 K Street, N.W., Suite 1150
 Washington, D.C. 20005 • Telephone: 202-371-6710

Reed Irvine, Editor

\$1.00

June-B 1984

XIII-12

BRING BACK BEN BRADLEE

At the annual shareholders' meeting of The Washington Post Co. in 1981, Katharine Graham, the chairman of the board said: "I believe that a communications company should be open. I am happy to answer any questions, and we have gone to the greatest extent that we can. I don't mind answering questions. I feel that it is our responsibility." At the annual meeting of the Washington Post on May 11, 1984, the secretary of the company, Alan Finberg, threatened to have Reed Irvine, the chairman of Accuracy in Media, ejected for persisting in trying to get Mrs. Graham to respond to his questions.

The exchange began with Mr. Irvine putting before Mrs. Graham a list of AIM complaints. He said: "Kay, in accepting an honorary degree at Duke University recently, you said that the press must be 'more accurate, sensitive, complete and fair and that it must admit errors and correct mistakes.' I would like to go down a list of erroneous and unfair articles that have appeared in *The Post* which have not to my knowledge been corrected even though I called them to the attention of the editor. I would like your comment on each of them." Irvine listed 18 letters he had sent *The Post* in the previous eight months. Here are some of them.

1. On September 13, 1983, columnist Joseph Kraft said that the Soviets had produced convincing evidence that they had confused KAL flight 7 with an RC-135 Air Force reconnaissance plane. AIM pointed out that they had produced no such evidence and had not even claimed at Marshal Ogarkov's press conference that they had confused the two planes.

2. On September 18, *The Post* ran a negative review of an important new book on China, *Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese* by Stephen W. Mosher. The review was written by Jack Chen, a graduate of Moscow University and employee of Tass and the London Daily Worker, before going to China in 1951, where he remained for the next 20 years, emerging to come to the U. S., reportedly under instructions from the Chinese Communist regime. The editors admitted to AIM that Chen was not an appropriate person to review Mosher's book, but there was never any public acknowledgement nor any effort to undo the harm Chen did in discouraging the reading of this book.

3. On October 29, a front-page story in *The Post* by Loren Jenkins accused President Reagan of exaggerating the importance of weapons found on Grenada. Jenkins claimed that many of the rifles and handguns were antiques, saying he watched one of our soldiers open a crate that contained Marlin .30-30 carbines stamped with the date of manufacture, 1870. AIM had pointed out that this was impossible, since the first Marlin repeating rifle was not made until 1881 and .30-30 ammunition was not made until 1895. No correction was ever printed.

4. The same reporter, Loren Jenkins, had a story on November 21, complaining about the interrogation of a German woman on Grenada by our forces. Jenkins reported that she had had contacts with the notorious CIA defector Philip Agee. He identified Agee as "the former CIA agent who has attacked the agency in print and now lives in Hamburg." He did not mention that Agee has collaborated with Soviet bloc intelligence services, has had his passport lifted and has been deported from the U. K. as a security risk. Mrs. Graham was asked if she felt Jenkins had given an adequate identification of Agee.

5. On November 27, *The Post* ran a story from its London correspondent, Peter Osnos, discussing a British musical based on the life of the late actress, Jean Seberg, which repeats falsehoods exposed by AIM about alleged FBI mistreatment of Seberg. Since *The Post* had previously acknowledged that those charges were false, AIM said the Osnos article should have pointed this out, rather than perpetuating the error.

6. On December 12, AIM criticized a front-page story by David Hoffman which had created the impression that White House counselor, Edwin Meese, was callous about the problem of hunger by failing to report in context the answers Meese had given reporters about the desirability of waiting for a study then underway before trying to comment on the magnitude of the problem. The impression given by the transcript of Meese's remarks, which *The Post* also printed, was very different from the impression given by Hoffman's story.

7. On February 1, 1984, AIM wrote to point out the

contrast between the treatment of Soviet charges that the U.S. had violated arms limitation agreements and the treatment of the U.S. denial of that charge. The charges had been carried on page one, with no U.S. comment included. The response, a strong and detailed rebuttal of the charge, was buried on page A8 the next day.

8. On April 26, AIM wrote to comment on the failure of The Post to cover the Good Friday Catholic procession in Managua, Nicaragua which ABC News reported had very strong anti-Sandinista overtones. The Post's ombudsman, Sam Zagoria, had replied that it was not covered because no Washington Post reporter was there, but The Washington Times had published a good story based on the ABC News report and its own inquiries.

9. On May 8, AIM wrote to Mrs. Graham to call attention to the numerous letters of complaint that The Post had ignored and to protest another phony scandal the paper had tried to create that day. This was a front-page story about our ambassador to Costa Rica, Curtin Winsor. The Post had made much of the fact that Amb. Winsor had, on the advice of his attorney, refused to accept notice of a lawsuit against him that had been served improperly. (The suit related to a matter pre-dating his appointment). The reporter who wrote the story admitted that it was of interest only because it involved "a sitting ambassador." The implication was that sitting ambassadors are not supposed to exercise their legal rights as ordinary citizens do. Mr. Irvine observed that in the treatment of Amb. Winsor The Post was again trying to create a phony scandal. He asked how this comported with Mrs. Graham's statement in Durham, North Carolina that the press must be "more accurate, sensitive, complete and fair."

An "Open" Communications Company?

The ensuing dialogue tells more about how Katharine Graham and Donald Graham really feel about accuracy, fairness and completeness of reporting than does that eloquent address at Duke University. It also tells a lot about how happy Mrs. Graham is about answering questions from shareholders and demonstrating her belief that a communications company should be open. Here is how it went.

Katharine Graham: Well, you and I don't always see alike about what errors and mistakes have been committed, Reed. I will ask Don to answer whatever he wants.

Donald Graham: Reed, it's hard for me to comment on it. The abiding theme of your question is that we have not printed your letters to the editor on a dozen or more occasions. We have for years printed lots of letters to the editor. In the last two or three years since The Star went out of business, we have substantially expanded our space for letters and small pieces and letters of less than column length. We do give priority to those commenting critically on our reporting or on things we printed in the paper. But we receive every week hundreds, thousands of letters to the editor from people who want their views in the paper, and we don't view it as fair or as a wise use of the letters column to repeatedly make the letters column, where space is sought after, available to the same people over and over and over again. If you ask me,

have we had a fair range of comment and debate on most of the important issues raised in your list, I would say yes. On a specific question, that's a tough judgment that the editors of the paper have to make every day, and they've made it to the best of their ability in the cases you've raised here. You've raised a long series of differing questions, in some of which you differ with the views of a commentator, some in which you disagree with the views of a review or in one case, a letter to the editor, and so on. The editor is trying to put out a good paper and trying to put out a good, fair, balanced editorial page, op-ed page, letters column. They have to make a lot of difficult choices among the worthy material submitted for publication in the paper and have done their best to do it and to give the readers a full range of commentary on important issues, including many of those you mentioned.

Irvine: Don, let me point out—

K. Graham: Reed, Reed, enough! We've had enough.

Irvine: I must respond, because this is an inaccurate description of what I said. I am not saying, Kay, that I am demanding that every letter I send to The Washington Post be printed, by no means. I've always made it clear every year that this is not my request. I am asking, Kay, and I direct this to you, not to Don. It was you who said that you believe that errors must be corrected . . . I don't care how the correction is made; if the correction is made by writing an editorial, as was done in the Jean Seberg case at our instigation, that's fine . . . All I'm asking is that the corrections be made . . . You, the chairman of the board, are saying that corrections must be made, but corrections are not made of serious errors. Let me cite just one case . . . the case of the non-existent 1870 Marlin rifles. There couldn't be a more clear-cut case of an error, a serious error, that was front-paged and used specifically for a disinformation purpose, to suggest that the U.S. government, in saying that there were a lot of arms stockpiled down in Grenada, that this was some kind of joke because they were really antique weapons of the type used to fight the Indian wars. I have not been able to get from anybody at The Washington Post, Kay, an explanation of why that error was never corrected.

K. Graham: Because I don't think they thought it was a substantive error.

Irvine: Do you think it's not a substantive error? For a front page story to be ridiculing what the president of the United States said, saying these were old rifles, Indian War rifles, and the facts show that he (the reporter) was wrong.

K. Graham: Some were; some weren't. Sit down!

Irvine: Is that an answer? Is that an answer? Kay, for someone who got up at Durham, North Carolina and said that errors must be corrected—is that the way you believe in correcting errors?

K. Graham: Errors are as much in the eye of those who are writing us sometimes as those who are writing for us. Thank you.

Irvine: Kay—

K. Graham: You're not always right either.



NOTES FROM THE EDITOR'S CUFF

By Reed Irvine

AIM Report

June-B 1984

OUR LEAD STORY IN THIS ISSUE DISCUSSES THE WASHINGTON POST ANNUAL MEETING AND THE contradiction between Katharine Graham's professed belief that a communications company such as hers should be open and answer questions and the actual performance. There is also a disparity between what Mrs. Graham says about the importance of the media acknowledging and correcting errors and the performance of the Washington Post in that regard. There were other contradictions that surfaced at the annual meeting. It was acknowledged that in 1983 the Washington Post Co. earned a healthy 21.8 percent return on equity. I asked why, in view of the excellent earnings, the company felt it necessary to raise both subscription prices and advertising rates, exploiting the monopoly the newspaper has in the Washington, D. C. area. Mrs. Graham didn't think The Post was a monopoly, since it now faces competition, she said, from The Washington Times and USA Today. The Post has a daily circulation of 750,000 and a Sunday circulation of over one million. The two competitors named by Mrs. Graham probably don't have 20 percent of the market combined, and their share of the advertising lineage would be even less. But Mrs. Graham saw no ethical question in The Post's pushing up its rates even though the return on equity is almost double the returns that the oil companies were earning back in 1973 when The Post and other media were running big stories about the "outrageous" and "obscene" profits of the oil companies. The average rate of return on equity for oil companies in 1973 was 11.6 percent!

MRS. GRAHAM'S BELIEF IN "OPENNESS" ON THE PART OF COMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES DID NOT extend to permitting AIM to have the annual meeting recorded on videotape. We contracted with a TV production company for this to be done, but The Post would not allow it. Nor did Mrs. Graham's belief in reporting being complete and accurate extend to insisting that The Post tell its readers what really went on at the annual meeting. One would have had to read The Washington Times or The Washington Inquirer to learn what really went on. The Post didn't find any of the material discussed in this issue of the AIM Report newsworthy.

THE WASHINGTON POST IS EDITORIALY FOURSQUARE BEHIND THE DEMANDS OF MINORITIES AND women for equal treatment and for affirmative action to help make up for past discrimination. It was pointed out at the annual meeting this year, as in previous years, that The Washington Post Co. board is lily white and the only woman on it is Mrs. Graham herself. The absence of any black on the board is especially conspicuous since the paper is published in a city that is about 70 percent black.

THE POST IS ALSO FAMOUS FOR ITS INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING. IT IS STILL LIVING ON ITS Watergate credentials. But there are some areas where its investigative reporting has been surprisingly weak. One of these is in the area of drugs. The Washington Post showed little interest in the 1982 drug scandal on Capitol Hill. It buried stories about it deep inside the paper and did no independent reporting to ferret out the truth. It spiked one column by Jack Anderson on the scandal, a column which named names of congressmen and senators that were supposed to have been involved in drug use. The column mentioned Sen Edward Kennedy and another member of his family, among others. Rather than pursuing this matter with "Watergate" vigor, The Post went along with what many people in Washington consider to be a very unenthusiastic probe by the Justice Department and by former HEW secretary, Joseph Califano. The Post did not see any injustice in the fact that a House employee, Robert T. Yesh, was sent to jail after "alleging that he sold cocaine on the floor of the House to Rep. Ronald V. Dellums," a far-left congressman from Berkeley, Calif.

A POSSIBLE REASON FOR THE POST'S LACK OF INTEREST IN DRUG SCANDALS (INCLUDING STORIES about the involvement of Cuba and other communist countries in promoting the smuggling of drugs into the U. S.) surfaced on June 7, when Robert Woodward said on the CBS Morning News that he had been told that "probably 40 people" at The Post "use cocaine regularly." Bob Woodward ought to know. He is The Post's assistant managing editor for investigation. But Mr. Woodward claimed not to have put his investigative talents to work exploring drug use in Washington or even drug use at The Washington Post, even though he has just published a book about the late John Belushi, the actor, and drug use in Hollywood. Mr. Woodward said he did not know any of the cocaine users at The Post, and he didn't know if it was true that they numbered as many as 40. He simply had not checked out this charge of felonious activity right under his nose.

BENJAMIN BRADLEE, THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF THE POST, WAS QUOTED IN A STORY PUBLISHED on the second page of the Style section as saying, "I don't know what the hell Bob is talking about. None of the editors knows what he is talking about. Cocaine is illegal, and if I hear of anyone using it around here, it's out the door, goodbye." Cocaine is also very expensive, and the cub reporters probably can't afford it even on the generous salaries paid by The Post. Those in the upper echelons would be the more likely users. Mr. Bradlee would have us believe that he was oblivious to the fact that Janet Cooke's story about the fictitious 8-year-old heroin addict, Jimmy, was being questioned by many on his staff before it was submitted for a Pulitzer Prize. Now Mr. Bradlee would have us believe that he is totally unaware of any cocaine use by Post personnel. But back in the summer of 1978, when White House adviser on drug abuse, Dr. Peter Bourne, was forced to resign after it was revealed that he had been observed snorting cocaine at a party, it was disclosed that The Washington Post was able to confirm the report because three of its employees were at the same party. The party was given by NORML, a pro-marijuana lobbying group. The Post never disclosed the names of the three employees who were at the party, and it showed its own softness on this issue by cutting five and a half paragraphs from a Jack Anderson column of August 10, 1978, on drug use by members of Congress. One wonders who those three employees of the Post were. Are they still there, or was it "out the door, goodbye" for them? Will Bob Woodward investigate drug use at The Post?



(It will help if you staple coupon to a larger sheet)

THE HANDSOME GENTLEMAN ON THE LEFT IS TV star Lorne Greene, proudly displaying the AIM tie that was presented to him at our San Diego conference on June 1-2. Lorne and his wife, Nancy, were among the speakers that made San Diego our best conference ever. A total of 313 registered. They kept telling me that it was absolutely the best conference they ever attended. It was taped in both audio and video. The audio tapes are available for \$95 for the complete set of 14 or for \$7 for individual tapes from Tape-Tech, 1306 Market, Galveston, TX 77550. For information about the video tapes call World Research Inc., 619-755-9761.

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Irvine: Well, tell me when I'm wrong. If I'm wrong, fine. Tell me. Answer the letters.

K. Graham: We've done our best. Now sit down.

Irvine: You've not answered the letters. Is that the best you can do?

Alan Finberg (Secretary of the corporation): Mr. Irvine, if you do not sit down, we'll have a security officer escort you out. You cannot dominate this meeting.

Irvine: Fine. I'm just trying to get an answer to a very simple question.

K. Graham: You have been answered. Evelyn is next.

Bradlee Itching to Answer

While the chairman of the board and the publisher of The Washington Post were stonewalling and refusing to respond to a single one of the 18 complaints cited by Mr. Irvine, the executive editor of the paper, Benjamin C. Bradlee, was eager to answer AIM. At least, that is what he indicated in a speech he gave at Marquette University just a few weeks before the shareholders' meeting.

Bradlee's speech was on the subject of "Accuracy in the Media," not a title of his own choosing, as he explained when he began his talk with these words: "I'm going to talk about Accuracy in the Media, and I'm not quite sure why, because someone assigned me this title, and it's a very noble goal. Some of you may know that it's also the name of a bunch of knee-jerk conservatives based in Washington who earn a pretty good living and a lot of notoriety hectoring the networks, The New York Times and The Washington Post. They are, in my opinion, a perversion of the words, accuracy in media, but I suspect we'll talk more about that later."

A short while later, Mr. Bradlee told of his desire to answer AIM's criticisms. He said: "It is time to stand up

and rebut some of the more outrageous criticisms of Mobil, for instance, or that group that calls itself 'Accuracy in Media,' or even the president of the United States, whoever he may be or whatever party he represents."

Regrettably, Ben Bradlee did not get around to rebutting any of the specific criticisms that AIM has directed against The Washington Post during his Marquette talk. He was not present at the Post annual meeting, which would have provided him with an ideal opportunity to answer our charges. Mr. Bradlee used to attend the annual meetings and enter into the debate. He has been conspicuously missing for several years. In 1981, when one of the main topics of discussion was the scandal over the fake story about an eight-year-old heroin addict that won a Pulitzer Prize for Post reporter Janet Cooke, Bradlee's absence from the annual meeting was explained by Mrs. Graham. She said that she had asked him not to attend.

But now that Bradlee thinks the time has come to answer AIM's "outrageous charges," Katharine Graham should unleash him. His answers would probably be no better than they were back in the days before he was banned from the annual meetings, but they couldn't be any less satisfactory than the non-answers provided by Katharine and Donald Graham. But there is no reason to wait until 1985. AIM would be delighted to hear Mr. Bradlee's rebuttals now. He could start with the list of complaints that we presented to Mrs. Graham on May 11.

What You Can Do

Write to Benjamin C. Bradlee, Executive Editor, The Washington Post, Washington D. C. 20071. Urge him to provide AIM with his rebuttal of all the unanswered complaints that AIM has made of inaccurate, incomplete and unfair material in The Washington Post.

SCARE STORIES SELL MAGAZINES

by Dr. Thomas H. Jukes

A series of two articles by Orville Schell, "A Kind of Commons," appeared in the New Yorker magazine April 23 and 30. The title is taken from the following quotation:

The vulnerability of microorganisms to antibiotics is a kind of commons—a resource which if we consume it by the use of antibiotics for non-medical purposes in animals is diminished in man. The benefit of using these drugs routinely as over-the-counter products to help animals grow faster, or in prophylactic programs, does not outweigh the potential risks posed to people.

—Donald Kennedy, Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, 1977

This theory of Kennedy's was incorrect. This is clearly shown by the fact that seven years after he made the above statement there has been no increase in bacterial resistance to antibiotics and no outbreaks of resistant human disease in this country that is attributable to the use of antibiotics in animal feed. Kennedy, whose field is

invertebrate zoology, made the statement on April 15, 1977, a few days after he took office as head of the FDA. He also said that he felt a "personal and philosophical involvement in this decision" to ban tetracyclines from animal feed use. His involvement in this effort has been shared in recent years by his successor, Dr. Jere Goyan, who joined with five others in October 1983 in asking President Reagan and Secretary Margaret Heckler of the Department of Health and Human Services for an immediate ban on the use of tetracyclines and penicillin in animal feed. Curiously, three members of this group advised free-lance writer Orville Schell and "checked various drafts of his manuscript for errors."

The "Kennedy theory" that resistance to antibiotics steadily increases as a result of widespread use was recently demolished by Dr. Victor Lorian of Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center in New York. Dr. Lorian found that resistance to 15 different antibiotics has not changed during the past 12 years. This conclusion was based on data obtained from 244 hospitals throughout

the United States. The data include 43,246,169 individual tests. Dr. Lorian concluded that "the increase of bacterial resistance at an alarming pace is a myth."

Since I was involved in the discovery that feeding animals antibiotic drugs helped their growth and thereby improved the efficiency and lowered the cost of meat production, Jonathan Schell interviewed me for his articles. I learned last November that the articles were to be published by the New Yorker, and so I telephoned him to ask if I could see them prior to publication. He said this was not possible. I then asked if I could see the proofs of his book from which the New Yorker articles were taken. He said that the New Yorker prohibited this, too, but that I would eventually receive a phone call and that passages would be read to me for my suggestions.

Eventually I was called by a Mr. Kaplan of the New Yorker. He read to me only the passages in which my name was mentioned. He told me that it would not be possible for me to see the galley proofs. Obviously, the New Yorker in its passion for accuracy is very careful to exclude prying eyes.

Nader Loves It

While the New Yorker and Mr. Schell were very careful to keep me from seeing the text of what he had written, Ralph Nader, whose expertise in microbiology had not previously come to my attention, was permitted to read Schell's work in advance. Late in March, Random House announced the publication of a book by Schell, the book from which the New Yorker articles were taken almost verbatim. Nader loved the book, saying that it "deserves a Pulitzer Prize for corporate and consumer reporting . . . a precise and gripping report . . . about the new drug-addicted meat and poultry industry. Hold on to your vegetables."

I got my first look at what Schell had written in the New Yorker when the April 23 issue appeared on the newsstands. My impression is that the articles were written with considerable help from Mr. Schell's scientific advisers who are so feverishly pressing for a ban on the use of antibiotics in animal feed. They are a corrosive put-down of middle Americans who are involved in meat production, who are made to look like slobs and goons.

In contrast, one of Schell's scientific gurus is a man whose "energy and youthfulness belie the strands of grey that radiate from his temples through his bushy head of hair." Another is "of medium height with dark curly hair and a well-trimmed moustache." Schell himself is from Marin County, Calif., the laid-back land of Cyra McFadden's *The Serial*, and doubtless New Yorker editors and readers are in tune with his portrayals.

The claims of danger of increasing resistance to antibiotics are substantiated by Schell mostly by describing outbreaks of disease in Latin American countries where antibiotics are sold without restrictions for human use but are used very little in animal feeds.

Schell was very selective in the choice of quotations from his interview with me. I pointed out to him that

antibiotics fed to animals have been persistently effective ever since this practice was begun in 1950. If this use of antibiotics were producing the resistance that Schell and his scientific advisers say they fear, why hasn't this been reflected in a decrease in the effectiveness of antibiotics in stimulating the growth of livestock?

This is a question that is a fatal weakness in Schell's argument, and it is one that he could not entirely ignore. It is interesting to note how he deals with it. Rather than quoting me or any other reputable scientist, Schell uses a marketing employee of a manufacturer of antibiotic feeds to half make the point. Here is what he quotes him as saying: "Why would these farmers pay money to us if they weren't getting results? Our Aureo S-P 250 costs about two dollars and fifty cents a pound, and about 85 percent of all hog farmers are using some sort of subtherapeutic antibiotic like Aureo S-P 250. You tell me why these guys would be putting out all this money if they weren't getting any returns."

Schell then proceeds to provide an answer to that argument from Richard P. Novick, M. D., director of the Public Health Research Institute of the City of New York. Painting Dr. Novick as a man of great prestige whose work is financed by grants from the American Cancer Society, the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration, Schell quotes him as saying: "I am far from convinced that these antibiotic additives are all that effective in promoting growth anyway. Basically, I think, the farmers have been sold a bill of goods and are squandering an extremely important human resource. As far as I'm concerned, the drug companies are responsible." The "objective" distinguished scientist answers the drug salesman.

The fact is the farmers are right, and Dr. Novick is revealing an anti-business bias and willingness to ignore the scientific evidence. Why are the antibiotics still effective after 34 years? The best explanation comes from Dr. Lorian's findings that there has been no increase in resistance. Probably an equilibrium exists between resistant and susceptible bacteria in the environment under conditions of exposure to antibiotics in animal feeds or in medical use. There is no consumable and irreplaceable "commons." Those who are eager to ban antibiotic animal feeds, which would reduce the supply and raise the cost of meat, have suppressed scientific findings and opinions that don't support their case. Scare stories sell magazines.

Dr. Thomas H. Jukes is professor of medical physics at the University of California at Berkeley and a member of AIM's National Advisory Board.

The AIM REPORT is published twice monthly by Accuracy in Media, Inc., 1275 K Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20005, and is free to AIM members. Dues and contributions to AIM are tax-deductible. The AIM Report is mailed 3rd class to those whose contribution is at least \$15 a year and 1st class to those contributing \$30 a year or more. Non-member subscriptions are \$35 (1st class mail).
